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Richmond News



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Chinese New Year decorations dazzle shoppers at Aberdeen Centre where the Year of the Rat will be celebrated with an array of festivities.

Green zone protection could go brown: Coun.

BY NELSON BENNETT
nbennett@richmond-news.com

Coun. Harold Steves is raising a red flag over recommendations to remove Metro Vancouver's power to veto development on farmland throughout the region.

"If Metro Vancouver loses its right to protect farmland, every bit of farmland from here to Maple Ridge will be just as vulnerable as Garden City," Steves warned in a brief to city council Monday.

But as far as Coun. Rob Howard can tell, Steves is tilting at an imaginary foe.

"He seems to be extremely excited about an issue that doesn't appear to exist," Howard said. "I don't know what he's refer-

ring to."

Given the dryness of the topic (staff recommendations on Metro Vancouver's regional growth management strategy), Steves said he can understand how his fellow councillors could approve staff recommendations in a report to the city's planning committee last week without seeing a glaring omission. He wasn't quite sure himself

just what the report says — and he's the committee's chairman.

"It took me six hours to analyze the report," he said.

The problem, it appears, is not so much what the report says, but rather what it doesn't say.

"No mention is made of maintain-

ing the right of the Metro Vancouver Board to vote on the exclusion of farmland from the green zone," Steves says in a brief to council. "If this means that Richmond no longer supports the actual protection of farmland by Metro Vancouver, the ALR is threatened."

Most farmland in the region is already in the Agricultural Land Reserve — the regional green zone adds an additional layer of protection.

In 1999, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (now Metro Vancouver) put private farmland in green zones, Steves said. (The Garden City lands were exempt

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see *Veto* page 4



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